



Working with Soundtracks

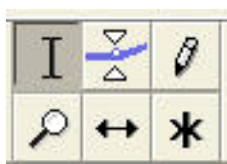
Soundtracks

Audacity can assist you with preparing soundtracks for your digital slideshows, digital movies, and PowerPoint presentations. You may want to shorten or lengthen a music clip; you may want to use different musical clips mixed together.

The Tools Needed

In soundtracks, we often need to create fade ins or fade outs and to reposition music clips. Among the Editing Tools in Audacity, you will find the three most frequently used tools very helpful for tweaking soundtracks.

Editing Tools



Most Frequently Used Tools



Selection Tool – can highlight a section for fade in or fade out



Time Shift Tool – can reposition sections on the timeline



Zoom Tool – can provide easier-to-use views of a soundtrack project

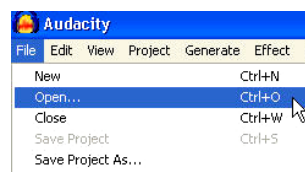
Modifying the Length of a Music Clip

You may need to make a soundtrack match the duration of your other multimedia elements for, say, a series of slides. You can shorten or lengthen a music clip in Audacity.

Shortening a Music Clip

If your original music clip runs too long for your multimedia project, you can shorten the clip by simply cutting out a section and then, as needed, apply a filter to smooth out the cut point(s).

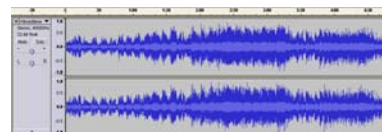
1. After starting up Audacity, under the **File** menu, choose **Open**.



2. Navigate to and select your music clip's sound file.



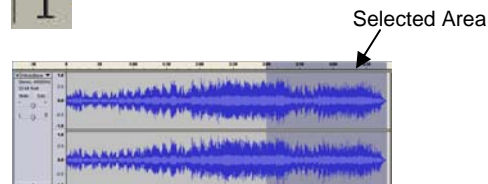
3. Click on the **Open** button. The music clip will open in Audacity's editing area.



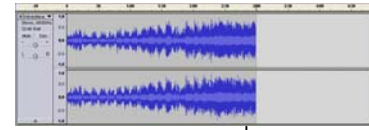
4. From the **Editing Tools**, choose the **Selection Tool**.



5. Click and, while continuing to hold the mouse button down, move the cursor (**Click and Drag**) over the music clip to select a section that you wish to eliminate.



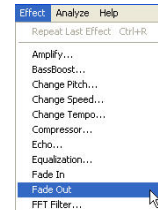
6. Press the **Delete** key. Now, with the section previously selected eliminated, your music clip is shortened. The edited clip, however, may now end abruptly in the middle of a loud passage.



7. To avoid an abrupt ending, first, select a small section at the end of the shortened music clip.



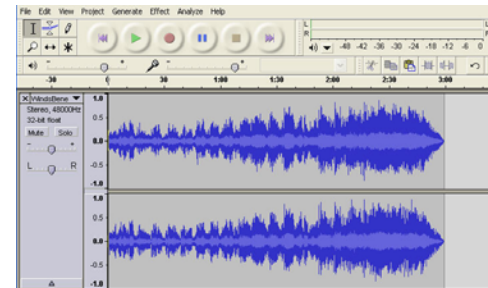
8. Next, under the **Effect** menu, choose **Fade Out**.



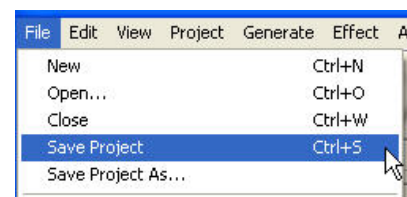
9. The wave forms in the selected area now grow smaller and smaller and indicate that the sound gradually grows softer and softer.



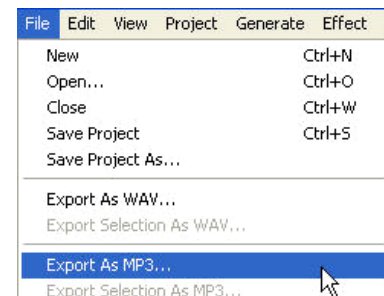
10. Our editing has designed a shortened sound with a **Fade Out** for a more pleasing ending.



11. To save the Audacity project in case further editing might be needed, under the **File** menu, choose **Save Project**. Give your project an appropriate name, specify where you want the project file saved, and then click on the **Save** button. Keep in mind that the project file will preserve your Audacity editing environment as it was when you performed the **Save**. The project file is *not* a sound file that you can use in another software program.



12. To create a sound file that can be used in another software program, under the **File** menu, choose **Export as MP3** (or **Export as WAV**). Give the sound file to be exported an appropriate name, specify where you want the sound file saved, and then click on the **Save** button.

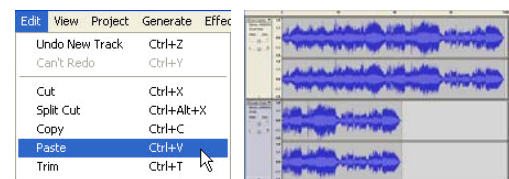
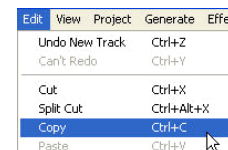
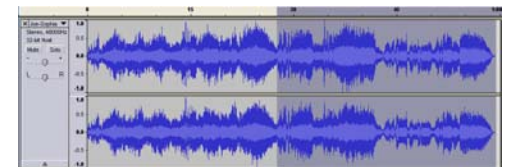
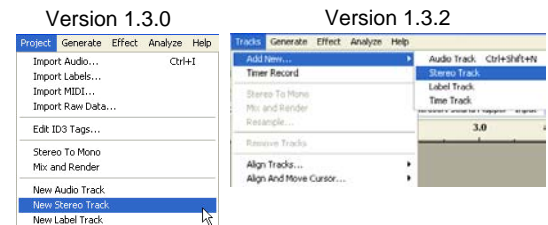
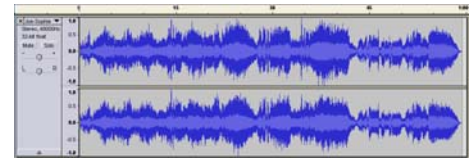


Lengthening a Music Clip

One way to make a music clip longer is to repeat a portion of it—beginning, middle, or end. Choosing the portion of music to repeat involves using your musical ear, however good or not so good it may be.

Repeating a Portion of Music to Lengthen a Musical Clip

1. Select **Open** under the **File** menu and open a music sound file in Audacity. A track with the wave forms of that file appears in the editing area.
2. Under the **Project** menu, choose **New Stereo Track** to add a new blank stereo track. The blank track can be used to hold a *pasted in* section of the opened sound file. (Audacity Version 1.3.2 changes the procedure for adding a new stereo track. Under the **Tracks** menu, choose **Add New** and then select **Stereo Track**.)
3. Note that the editing area now contains two tracks
 - a. a top track with the opened sound file
 - b. a blank bottom track
4. In the opened sound file, locate a section that you wish to repeat, and using the **Selection Tool**, highlight that section.
5. Under the **Edit** menu, choose **Copy**.
6. Next, click into the bottom blank track—that click is important—and then under the **Edit** menu choose **Paste**. The copied portion of the top track is copied into the bottom track. Soon, we will want to move the copied passage so that it plays later in the timeline.
7. First, to get a more helpful zoomed-out view for repositioning the copied passage in the bottom track, begin by choosing the **Zoom Tool**.
8. Positioned over the wave forms, the icon for the **Zoom Tool** bears a plus sign (+), indicating *zoom in*. Since we want to *zoom out*, and not *zoom in*, hold down the **Shift** key and the plus sign (+) now changes to a negative sign (-), indicating *zoom out*.



Zoom In

Hold Down
Shift Key



Zoom Out

9. Click on the wave forms once to *zoom out*. To the right of the wave forms, room is made for a blank area on the timeline. We have a better view to scrutinize the sliding of the sound in the bottom track to the right.



10. To reposition the bottom track, first select the **Time Shift Tool**.

11. Next, click on the bottom track and hold down the mouse button.

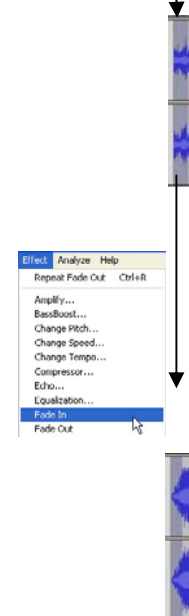


12. Then, move the mouse to drag the bottom music clip to the right until there is a slight overlap between the bottom and top music clip. The bottom track will begin to play its sounds while the top track is still ending.



13. To smoothen the transition between our two tracks, we can simultaneously *fade in* one track while the other *fades out*, an effect commonly called a *cross-fade* or *audio dissolve*. In our example, the top track is already *fading out*. To *fade in* the bottom track, first choose the **Selection Tool** and then highlight the overlapping section of the bottom track.

14. Under the **Filter** menu, choose **Fade In**.

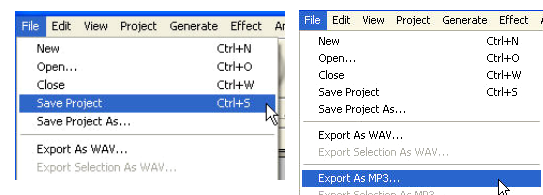


15. The selected wave forms in the bottom track have changed and indicate that the sound starts in silence and gradually becomes louder and louder.

16. Our editing has designed a lengthened sound with a *cross-fade* for a more pleasing transition between the joined parts.



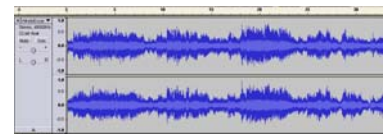
17. Remember to choose **Save Project** to preserve your editing work in Audacity and, if you want a sound file that can be used in other software programs, to choose **Export as MP3** or **Export as WAV**.



Mixing Different Music Clips

Often a soundtrack containing two or more different songs is desirable. For example, in longer multimedia projects, you can use a series of songs to provide musical variety or, where appropriate, to indicate section changes in mood and/or message.

1. Select **Open** under the **File** menu and open a music sound file in Audacity. A track with the wave forms of that file appears in the editing area.



2. Opening a second music sound file within the same Audacity project requires a different course of action. Under the **Project** menu, choose **Import Audio**. Navigate to and select a second music sound file, and then click on the **Open** button.



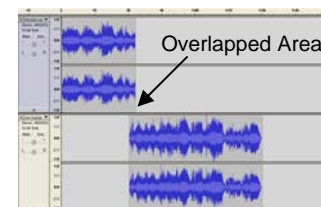
3. Two tracks are now present, each one with a different music clip but both with the same starting point on the timeline. To get the clips to play in sequence, one after the other, we will need to reposition one of the clips on the timeline.



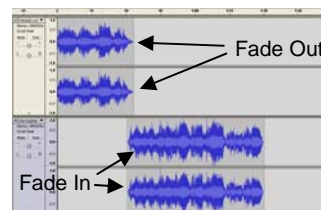
4. To get a more workable zoomed-out view of our tracks, select the **Zoom Tool** and, while holding down the **Shift** key, click anywhere over the tracks. The resulting view lets us see farther down the timeline.



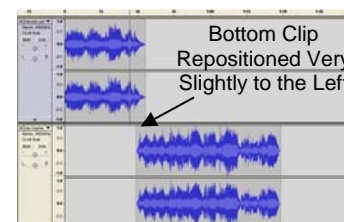
5. To reposition the bottom music clip, first select the **Time Shift Tool**. Then click and drag the bottom music clip to the right until there is a slight overlap between the top and bottom music clips.



6. For a smoother transition between the two music clips, use the **Selection Tool** to highlight the last part of the top clip and apply the **Fade Out** filter and then highlight the last part of the bottom clip and apply the **Fade In** filter.



7. Listen particularly to the overlapped area, and use the **Time Shift Tool** to fine tune the positioning of the music clips to achieve a seamless, pleasant-sounding transition.



8. Remember to choose **Save Project** to preserve your editing work in Audacity and, if you want a sound file that can be used in other software programs, to choose **Export as MP3** or **Export as WAV**.

